REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7-9 have been amended. Claim 6 has been canceled. Claims 10-12 have been newly added. Claims 1-5 and 7-12 are now pending in this application, with claim 1 being the only independent claim. Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Claims 1-9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,553,340 ("Peterson") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,189,232 ("Milosavljevic").

Newly added claims 10-12

Claims 10-12 have been newly added. Support for claims 10 can be found in paragraph [0043] of Applicant's published specification. Support for claims 11-12 can be found in paragraph [0029] of Applicant's published specification.

Rejection of claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

The Office Action states that claim 5 has been rejected as indefinite because it is allegedly unclear what the phrase "normal pressure" refers to, and the phrase "normal pressure" lacks sufficient antecedent basis.

Claim 5 has been amended to recite "the normal air pressure". There is only one normal air pressure, which is generally known as being approximately 100 kPa. Thus, Applicant submits that claim 5 is no longer indefinite and that there is sufficient antecedent basis, and that this rejection has now been overcome.

Rejection of claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action states that the combination of Peterson and Milosavljevic teaches all of Applicant's recited elements.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claim 6 and now recites, in part, a system for stabilizing a paper web in a paper machine that includes "a flexible nozzle wall coupled to the blow box", which Peterson and Milosavljevic, whether taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest.

Neither Peterson nor Milosavljevic mention a flexible nozzle wall being part of the disclosed blow box. In the rejection of original claim 6, the Examiner asserts on page 8 of the Office Action that it is considered to be obvious to a person skilled in the art to arrange, in connection with a blow box, a flexible nozzle wall that bends elastically in fault situations. However, the Examiner has failed to provide a reference showing a flexible nozzle wall or a reason to modify the nozzle wall of Peterson or Milosavljevic. The Examiner merely makes a statement that it is well known to arrange a flexible nozzle wall in connection with a blow box. As stated by the Federal Circuit and MPEP §2142, "rejections on obviousness cannot be sustained with mere conclusory statements; instead, there must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness." In this case, the Examiner concludes that flexible nozzle walls are obvious without showing any prior art or motivation to evidence that allegation. Accordingly, the Examiner has failed to make a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to "a flexible nozzle wall coupled to the blow box", as now recited in independent claim 1.

Accordingly, the rejection of independent claim 1 as unpatentable over Peterson and Milosavljevic should now be withdrawn.

Independent claim 9 recites limitations similar to independent claim 1 and is, therefore, patentably distinct over Peterson and Milosavljevic for reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, Peterson and Milosavljevic, whether taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the subject matter recited in Applicant's independent claims 1 and 9. Accordingly, claim 1 is patentable over Peterson and Milosavljevic under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claim 6 has been canceled. Claims 2-5 and 7, which depend directly or indirectly from amended independent claim 1, incorporate all of the limitations of independent claim 1 and are therefore deemed to be patentably distinct over Peterson and Milosavljevic for at least those reasons discussed above with respect to amended independent claim 1.

New claims 10-12 include recitations which further define the flexible nozzle wall in accordance with Applicant's specification which states, "it is possible to arrange in connection with the blow box a flexible nozzle wall that bends elastically in fault situations, web breaks, and the like, where an enlarged safety distance is needed between the cylinder and the box. This kind of a flexible nozzle wall has typically been arranged near the blow nozzle, in the machine direction a little after it. Advantageously the flexible nozzle wall is just above the nip. A flexible nozzle wall means both a wall that is made of a flexible material, and an element stiff as such that has been arranged so as to be flexible e.g. with the aid of a spring or a turning joint or that has been arranged so as to move around its axis or point of articulation. This kind of a flexible nozzle wall can function either with spring force or with gravitational force" (see paragraphs [0029], [0045], and Fig. 4 of Applicant's published specification). Claims 10-12 are allowable for at least these additional reasons.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of all rejections, and allowance of all pending claims is respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner have any comments, questions, suggestions, or objections, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned in order to facilitate reaching a resolution of any outstanding issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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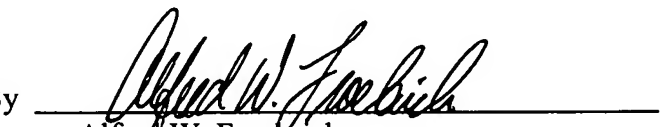
By 

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